

COMMUNITY-BASED RECOMMENDATIONS

Abstract of the Disclosure

5 A Web based system provides informational services for assisting customers
in selecting products or other types of items from an electronic catalog of a merchant.
Users of the system can create and join user communities, such as communities based
on user hobbies, localities, professions, and organizations. The system also supports
implicit membership communities that are based on email addresses (e.g., all users
having a "nasa.com" email address), shipping/billing addresses, and other known user
10 information. Using purchase history data collected for online users, the system
automatically identifies and generates lists of the most popular items (and/or items that
are becoming popular) within particular communities, and makes such information
available to users for viewing. For example, in the context of an online book store
users of the nasa.com community may automatically be presented a Web page which
15 lists the bestselling book titles among nasa.com users, or may be sent email
notifications of purchase events or hotselling books within the community. Another
feature involves automatically notifying users interested in particular products of other
users (preferably other members of the same community) that have purchased the
same or similar products. For example, in one embodiment, when a user accesses a
20 book detail page, the detail page is customized to include the names and email
addresses of other members of the user's community that recently purchased the same
book.

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